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THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

Confessions of a
Vanity Publisher's Assistant

Action

By J. Albert Mallory

Has the New Writer a Chance?

By Edwin Baird

The Socratic Method of
Plot-Building

By Edgar Mitchell Boyden

A Lesson in Persistence

By Godfrey Allen

*A Wealth of Literary Market Tips, Prize
Contests, British Markets, Trade Journal
Department, Editors You Want to Know*

OCTOBER
1930

Do You Preserve Your Published Stories?

Many Authors Make a Practice of Binding at Least One Copy of Each of Their Published Yarns.

If you preserve your published short-stories and serials in loose magazine form you know that in course of time they become torn, dog-eared, scattered, and lost. The wise writer will go to a little expense to preserve his work by having all published material bound in substantial book form. Not only does this mean that the material will be kept intact as a record of achievement, and in such a form that the stories can be read without suffering damage; it also means that you will have a complete copy of every story available, if book, second-serial, motion-picture, or radio rights should be called for at some future day.

The equipment available to Author & Journalist readers includes one of the best equipped book-binders in the West. We have worked out a schedule of binding costs for authors which is very reasonable.

The binding is in the beautiful Fabrikoid, much used by libraries, any color desired, and includes gold stamping of name and title on back cover.

SUGGESTIONS

The cost of binding depends upon the square dimensions and not on the thickness. Several stories from magazines of the same size can therefore be included within one cover, up to a thickness of as much as two inches.

The entire magazine or only the pages in which the writer's own story appear can be included in the binding. When stories appear in magazines of the larger flat size like The Saturday Evening Post, covering only a few sheets and probably being continued back through the advertising pages, it usually is best to incorporate the magazine as a whole in the binding.

Stories in magazines of smaller page size such as Adventure or Ace High, usually fill several pages in unbroken succession. The pages containing the story should be carefully removed (by taking the magazine apart) and several stories can be compactly bound under one cover.

The lettering on the backbone can include the title of the story and name of author, if one story is incorporated in a binding. When several stories are grouped in one binding, the gold lettering on backbone may read: "Stories—By Shakespeare, Milton," or "Serials—By Homer Hawthorne," or otherwise as the author may specify. Dates can be added if desired.

PRICE SCHEDULE

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9x12 size.....	3.00 per Vol.
11x14 size.....	3.25 per Vol.
12x17 size.....	3.50 per Vol.

Express or parcel post charges are extra. Approximately the same amount of postage should be included in remittance for return of books, as required to send the magazines to us for binding. Or books will be returned by Express Collect, if desired. Send remittance and full directions (what manuscripts are to be included in one binding, name to be stamped on backbone, etc.) in a separate letter.

THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

1938 Champa Street

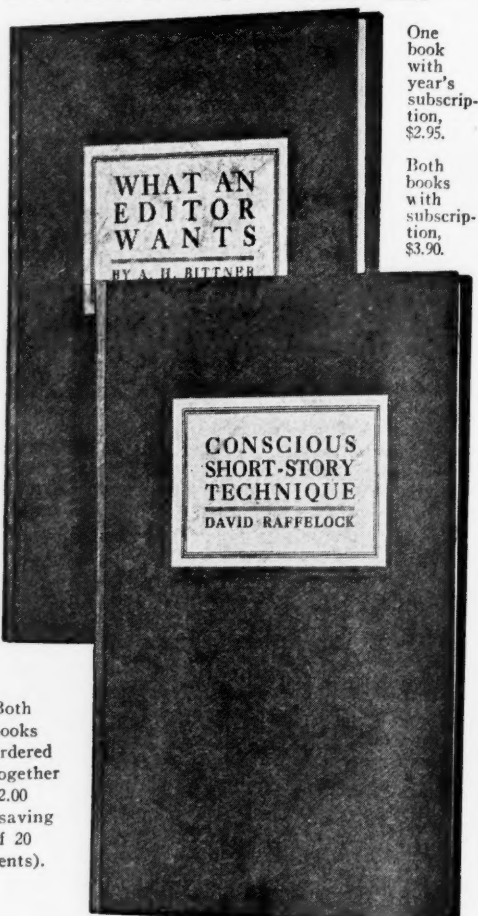
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BOOKS TO HELP YOU SELL

Recommended by the Editors of
The Author & Journalist

Conscious Short-Story Technique, David Raffelock, Associate Editor of The Author & Journalist, and Director of the Simplified Training Course. An authority "shows the way." \$1.10.

What An Editor Wants, A. H. Bittner, editor of Argosy All-Story Weekly. One of the most practical of all volumes on writing craftsmanship. \$1.10.



Both books ordered together \$2.00 (saving of 20 cents).

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Plotting the Short Story, Culpeper Chunn; gives invaluable assistance in story structure. \$1.00.

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THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

Founded, 1916

1839 Champa Street, Denver, Colo.

WILLARD E. HAWKINS, Editor

David Raffelock Associates Harry Adler
Thomas Hornsby Ferril John T. Bartlett

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FROM TIME TO TIME THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST has issued warnings against certain concerns which, as a group, have earned the name of "vanity" publishers. That these warnings are needed is indicated by the fact that almost every mail brings us letters of inquiry concerning "contracts" offered by such concerns, or letters from writers who have already been "gypped" and want to find out whether anything can be done about it. We welcome the opportunity, therefore, to publish in this issue a story of the inside workings of such a concern, written by a man who had an unusual opportunity to study the methods by which writers are exploited.

We are acquainted with the names of most of the field. It is, however, neither necessary nor advisable to give them here. Any firm that accepts a manuscript with glowing flattery, and asks the author to defray "part" of the cost of publishing, probably is a vanity publisher. In other words, it is not a publishing house at all, but merely masquerades under that title as a means of luring the unwary into its net.

There is no reason why a writer should not issue a book at his own expense, if he sees advantage in doing so, but in such an event he would do well to have the work done by a reliable printer. A printer naturally has no facilities for putting a book on the market, but neither has the vanity publisher.

Legitimate book publishers, save on the rarest of occasions, accept a book only if it seems to have a good chance of selling through regular channels. Such a publisher will ordinarily offer the writer a contract whereby the book is issued wholly at the publisher's expense, a royalty on sales (usually 10 per cent of retail price with a slight increase after a certain number of copies have been sold) being paid to the author. Sometimes, however, outright purchase is substituted for the royalty basis.

In the November issue, THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST will publish its annual "Handy Market List of Book Publishers." Care is taken to include in this list only legitimate book publishers. In case of a few publishers who do a legitimate publishing business, but occasionally require the author to advance costs of publication, this fact will be clearly indicated.

THE TREND among the pulp-paper Western magazines at the present time is decidedly toward the incorporation of a fair measure of love interest in their serials and longer yarns. A successful writer of Westerns writes that on querying a number of publishers with reference to a Western serial without love interest, he received the same reply from all: "Don't want to read it; must have woman interest."

This checks up with information gleaned by us from other sources, although not all of the publishers have come out definitely with such an announcement. The objection to woman interest in shorts, so far as most of the men's Western magazines is concerned, still seems to prevail.

ED BODIN sends us the following helpful extract from a letter written by Sumner N. Blossom, editor of *The American Magazine*, to a young literary aspirant who had submitted a story to him.

"This story isn't convincing. It has an artificiality that suggests that you were not working out of your life, but from sheer melodramatic imagination. Stick to people you know and in situations in which you are at home. You'll be surprised at the romance and drama you can find in the everyday life about you, if you train yourself to see it. All of which is meant constructively and offered in the hope that it may help you toward your goal."

SOME RECENT BOOKS

HOW TO PREPARE MANUSCRIPTS AND CONTEST ENTRIES. By A. Demott Freese and Gilson Vanderveer Willets. A. D. Freese & Son, Publishers, Upland, Ind. 35c.

This booklet contains helpful hints for young writers who may not be acquainted with the correct preparation of manuscripts and a survey of the contest field, with principles which contest entrants should follow in attempting to garner the prizes offered in literary, slogan, cut-out, and other forms of contests.

THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

October, 1930

Confessions of a Vanity Publisher's Assistant

The Poets' World (the name is my own); poetry and fiction of unusual merit. New writers welcomed. Payment upon acceptance.

I GIVE the line to you just as it appeared in a number of publications throughout the country. Just as it was read by thousands of ambitious writers. Hundreds of the more experienced smiled inwardly. A few former victims probably cursed. But the vast majority of uninitiated authors took the bait. For the line was the advertising of a Boston "vanity" publisher.

At some time or other, one in every hundred persons in these United States has submitted literary material to magazines or newspapers. Statistics of a reliable nature prove this. And the figures are by no means astounding. A man reads a story or poem in some publication, believes he can do something "just as good" and submits his attempt. The chances are heavy that he becomes discouraged after the second or third rejection slip. If not, however, and if he continues, he may eventually succeed in getting his name in print through the medium of a local columnist or some obscure fiction magazine. I refer, of course, to those who look upon writing as a hobby, or the result of innate talent. This article does not concern the authors who attack the market from a "work and study" standpoint.

Human nature is quite standardized. Most of us like to see our names in print. As the sight becomes more common, the glamour wears off, but how many of us have forgotten the first time? This particular whim of the human mind is the bread and butter of the vanity publisher. If un-

initiated writers were not so anxious to have their works published, this type of business would become insolvent.

My own experience was unique. I was employed by one of these so-called publishers, in Boston, for nearly six months. I had no idea, at the time, what kind of work I was getting into. But in those six short months I learned a perfectly legal process of swindling embryo authors and poets. The story of one of these bleedings, from beginning to end, is an interesting one. I'll recount the case of a man who, through his bitter experience with my employer, has become one of my warmest friends.

Blythe—I'll call him by that name—was a college man. All his spare minutes were occupied in writing verse. It was a hobby. He never tried to market any of his work. He wrote several class poems, revised songs, recited, wrote football songs. He rhymed of the trees, the lake, the river, the campus—but his subject material was always the same. The somber walls of his alma mater hovered in the background of every stanza of his work.

He graduated, and went into business. Poetry writing was forgotten. But his friends urged him to submit some of his work to magazines. Blythe smiled and shrugged his shoulders. But he started thinking. The desire for literary fame had not occurred to him, but the germ was being born, as it has been born in thousands of others.

He sent his poems to a leading magazine and they were promptly rejected. He tried again with the same results. Then his eye chanced upon the advertisement I have quoted above.

THREE days after Blythe had submitted ten of his poems to *The Poets' World* I was beckoned into the president's office. I say "president" because that was the title he assumed. In reality he was owner, manager, publicity director, salesman, editor, and proofreader! He did everything but set the type!

He gave me a neatly typed MS. At this time I was but a week old in my position. I hardly knew the ropes.

"Look that over," he said, without glancing up. "Study our files, and you'll find a form letter marked number one. Copy it, and sign my name. Return this stuff with the letter."

I understood, and went to work on Blythe's poetry. Compared with the usual run of amateur verses, they were good. But even ten of them grew monotonous. There was no variation of theme. Reading them was like listening to a song which was merely a repetition of one line of music. I laid them aside and rummaged for number one form letter. There were hundreds of them. There was one in nearly every folder. It went like this:

Dear Mr. B—

We have genuinely enjoyed reading this charming collection of poems. Frankly, they are far better than the average attempts that come to this office. "*The Poets' World*," however, is at present heavily overstocked. We do not feel justified in holding your contributions until such indefinite time as we shall be able to use them. In fairness to you, therefore, we are returning them, with our sincere regrets.

We suggest, however, that if you have enough of these poems to make a small book, we shall be glad to consider them for book publication.

Sincerely yours,
ELITE PUBLISHING COMPANY.

I REREAD the letter, and looked again at the poems. The president was reading a paper. I took the manuscript and the letter and drew a chair up to his desk.

"Well?" he said, sharply, putting down his paper.

"You suggest publishing these in book form," I began diffidently. "Aren't they too much of a kind? Too monotonous and too much like dozens of other works to make a seller?"

He bit off the end of a cigar.

"Don't let that worry you," he replied. "They will be published, if at all, at the expense of the author. We don't take any chances by financing new writers."

"But our advertisement"—I began, thinking of "new writers welcomed."

"Don't let that worry you," was his short answer. The interview was over. I had had

my first lesson in the methods of ensnaring a victim.

Now back to Blythe. He received the president's "personal" letter. It impressed him, as it was intended to do. The idea of seeing his work in print was gaining momentum. He did not know, of course, that our magazine, *The Poets' World*, was a twelve-page publication issued once a year. It had gone to press once, and was not due again for some months. As to being overstocked—work on the next issue had not even been begun!

Nor had he ever heard of the Elite Publishing Company. He did not know that the president *was* the company. If he had thought to look up the financial rating of the company he was about to do business with, he would have found it either negligible, or unlisted. But such a thought probably never occurred to him. He was carried away by the idea of having his work published. Here was a golden chance to join the world of writers who have published books.

He searched his stack of poems for the ones most suitable, and mailed them with great promptness. A few days later it was my duty to send him our second form letter, also personally typed, and signed by the president. It read:

Our reader's report on your manuscript was most favorable. We shall be glad to undertake the publishing of your poems in book form.

It is our usual practice, as you know, to put out an author's first work in a small, neatly-bound edition of one thousand copies. I have read your manuscript personally, however, and it seems to me that this book should be more pretentious. These poems are worth more than the average small, board-covered edition, and should be made up into an attractive, 20 mo. format, with cloth covers—gold stamped with the title and author's name.

As you know, the publication of poetry—and especially a first book of poetry—is something of a risk for both author and publisher. The cost of the first edition will approximate \$800, exclusive of the cost of review copies to be sent to leading newspapers and magazines, and the cost of the publicity campaign, which this book undoubtedly deserves.

We are willing to undertake half the risk, and feel assured that you will be willing to assume the other half. Under these terms, we shall be glad to publish a first edition upon receipt of \$400 from you.

For your convenience and assurance, we suggest that you forward \$200 at once. Our lists for the year are practically complete, and we ask that if you wish the book published in the Spring quota, you avoid unnecessary delay. One hundred dollars will be due upon receipt by you of the page proofs, and the final \$100 upon completion of the book.

We enclose contracts for your inspection, and feel sure that you will find our offer satisfactory. Should the book be a best seller, we guarantee, of course, to publish future editions entirely at our own expense, allowing you the usual royalty of ten per cent.

And so on. The net closed about our victim. When he should have seen visions of his book flopping sadly, he could see only sales in the thousands. His check for two

hundred dollars was received. A high price to pay, to see one's name on the cover of an ugly book! Contracts were signed, and returned. The author burned his bridges. He could not back out now, even if he was grossly dissatisfied with the page proofs. He had put it in writing that he would pay \$400 to the publishers, and \$400 is the amount he would pay whether he liked the book or not.

Goes another personal letter, from the president, of course, announcing that the MS. is being carefully edited and will soon go to press. This letter was sent about a month after the author had expected to have the galley proofs.

Another month—by this time I had learned a lot!—and the galleys of Blythe's book made their appearance. They were corrected and returned. We answered almost immediately with a letter of this sort:

"You know, of course (the author is expected to know everything), that all changes in the proofs are made at the author's expense. Type corrections are up to the printer, but any changes or revisions in the original MS. are held responsible to the author. The changes you have made in the galleys. . . ."

All of which is perfectly legitimate. Author's changes are up to the author, even with the best of publishers. But the unlucky Blythe could discover only four places where he had made slight revisions. And the additional bill enclosed with the above letter was more than forty dollars! The printer received probably half of this, and the remainder went toward "publicity" and "sales effort," which never materialized.

Finally the page proofs were ready. With them went another long form letter asking for the author's photograph, for publicity purposes. The photos are seldom used. The request is just another appeal to the vanity of the author.

With this last letter went a request for the author's own opinion of his work—and an account of his life and literary achievements. The author replied almost immediately with a rather modest account of his works to date, and a meager description of the book. He did not blow himself up. Not one-half as much as I did!

This account was rewritten by me, with alluring changes, and incorporated in the jacket flap of the coming book. The author's description of the book was also used on the jacket. It is much easier, in this

type of business, to please the author by using his own description, than by inventing a new one. Finally, a form letter asked for a list of the author's personal friends and acquaintances and a list of magazines and newspapers with which he was personally acquainted—if any. These latter, of course, were to be used for circularization and for "review copies."

At last came the book—cloth bound as per agreement, titled in cheap, imitation gilt. No illustrations. A scintillating blurb on the jacket, eulogizing book and writer. Altogether—just another book. And the second-hand book stores are full of them.

I was frankly disappointed in it. I could not help feeling that our victim had been bled expertly. Through our correspondence regarding the book I was beginning to know Blythe. I could foresee his disgust. The binding was cheap. The paper was cheap. The printing and the set-up were very ordinary. There was nothing to attract a prospective purchaser.

EIGHT hundred dollars for a thousand of those books! I began to do some figuring. My education was advancing with rapid strides! Eighty cents each to produce those tiny books. Even in these days of high cost of labor and material, I could not believe it.

We did not do our own printing. It was done by a jobber. I put the question straight to him. "How much did it cost us to print 'Gilded Stars'?" The answer was what I had expected.

The entire cost of publication was not over \$200. We had paid nothing for the MS. Our overhead consisted mainly of our rent, my salary, and the president's drawing account. No advertising was done. There were no salesmen to pay, for we made no effort to sell the book to retailers, except by mail. On the face of it we had made \$200 net profit without selling a single copy.

How about Blythe? He got the satisfaction of seeing his name on the cover of his book. In cash, he got nothing, could expect to get nothing, unless the book sold out the first edition and we reprinted. Then he would make twenty cents on a copy. If the book sold another thousand copies, he would make \$200, half what it cost him to publish.

Our publicity campaign consisted of sending a few damaged copies out to various newspapers and magazines. Our printer got out a neat single-page circular describing

the work. A copy of this was sent to the author, with a short note explaining that similar ones were being sent to a selected list of prospective purchasers and poetry readers.

This phase of the game is carried on quite decently. After all, the publisher has everything to gain by selling the book. But the poor sales methods surprised me. The president, in my opinion, was overlooking some of the best markets. Why peddle the book all over the country when the most likely sales were here in Boston, where that author was known?—"By a Boston Author"—a good sales point, as I thought, overlooked.

I worked late that night, composing several letters to local booksellers. I got but one answer to this effort. It was crisp, and to the point. They were not interested. I put on my hat, and went to see the writer of that letter. I showed him a copy of the book. He read two or three of Blythe's verses.

"They aren't bad," he commented. "They'd probably sell very well in certain circles. We handle a lot of that stuff in gift set-ups. But we don't do any business with Elite."

Asked why, he became voluble. My employer was a "sucker publisher" who made his living by bleeding ignorant beginners. His methods were underhanded. His product was poor. He was a blot on a proud industry. Booksellers were combined to wipe him out. He was as much a menace to the publishing industry as the "bucket shops" are to the brokerage business.

I went away from that store a wiser man. I got the same story with variations from several others. None of them would have anything to do with "Gilded Stars" on general principles. But the author is the only loser.

I made up my mind to stay with my company only long enough to see what finally happened to Blythe's book. And I didn't have long to wait. The book was reviewed favorably by a few obscure publications, but it failed miserably to sell. Blythe was bitterly disappointed. Our apology letter, telling of our loss to explain the failure of the book, wound up our dealings with him.

At the end of a certain period of time, outlined in the contract, it is the author's privilege to buy up the remaining copies at about half the original selling price. If he has grown tired of seeing the books, they

are remaindered—sold in job lots to second hand book shops, where they become part of a pockmarked, grimy array of similar volumes. The sale price has dropped from two dollars to ten cents.

Inveigling writers by means of a magazine like the *Poets' World* is only one way of getting the suckers. Another way commonly employed is to write to a list of beginners whose work is appearing in school or college publications:

Your work has attracted the eye of one of our readers. Have you ever considered having your poems published in book form?

The recipient of the letter probably has never given the matter a thought. But from that time on he does. He often develops into another victim.

Another letter to an unknown poet who enjoys contributing passable verse to some local columnist:

Your work has been called to our attention as very commendable. Could you write a number of poems similar to those printed in the *Daily Eagle*? We would be glad to talk business with you regarding their publication in book form.

METHODS of ensnaring victims are many and varied, but they all center on one vital fact: The ignorance of the beginner. If a sucker publisher's approach letter falls into the hands of one who knows what he is up against, it probably finds its way into a waste basket. But that seldom happens. These people know to whom they are writing.

One incident of the aftermath of one of these escapades with a vanity publisher is striking. It came to my ears through an exchange of reminiscences with an acquaintance who had also served time with a vanity publisher. He told of a young man, a boy who came to his office one day. His face was crimson, his manner most apologetic. He had recently had a volume of his poems published. The book had been an utter failure. Hardly a hundred copies had been circulated. Nine hundred others were on the shelves.

"I want to make some arrangement with you to buy up all the copies of my book that you have left," he told the publisher. "What price will you make me on them?"

The owner decided that, for some obscure reason, the fellow wanted them pretty badly. He named a price which was practically the retail sales figure. The boy didn't hesitate. He wrote out a check, and carried the

nine hundred volumes down to a waiting car. My friend was curious to know what he wanted with them. He slipped down when the boss wasn't looking, and asked the author point blank.

"I'll tell you," the fellow said, blushing again. "You've been decent with me. I've just been told what an idiot I have been. I can't blame anyone but myself. An aunt, who makes her living writing poetry, has just finished reading my book. She has described it with some adjectives that will burn in my memory as long as I live. She finished by saying that I was to go straight to the publishers and buy the remaining copies at her expense. She wanted no one to know that a relative of hers was capable of such drivel."

That is only one incident of its kind which came to my attention. There have been others. The state of mind of a man who wakes up to the fact that he has been taken in is something to beware of.

The vanity publisher, nevertheless, seems to be secure in his hold. Is the law at fault? Perhaps; but in the sight of the law the Elite is a legitimate publishing company. It has offices, publishes books according to contract. It may even be incorporated under the State laws.

THERE are thousands of Blythes. There are dozens of "Elite Publishing Companies" and *Poets' Worlds*. During the time I was connected with Elite, the printer was never idle. His presses were producing volumes like the one described at the rate of two a month. New writers were waiting in line to be slaughtered.

Don't think for a minute that every writer who submitted material to the *Poets' World* was ensnared. Many lacked the necessary capital. Others were smart enough to see through our scheme. But the percentage of suckers was large. About one in twenty would be a conservative estimate, and assured the publisher of a good livelihood with little effort attached.

Poets and novelists, as well as travel writers, essayists, medical men, scientists—all are meat for the Elite and its fellow racketeer concerns. Any man or woman who has something to write, and the urge to see his name in print, is a "possibility."

I know of no single case in which the author who fell for this scheme has gotten his money back, even though he sold the books himself. The publisher, however, is always in the clear. His contract is carefully worded. The agreed number of books was always printed by the Elite, but not always bound. Enough volumes were bound to meet the estimated demand of author and author's friends, and a few chance sales. If necessary, more of the pages were bound later, in small lots. But in most cases, the first binding of 100 copies was sufficient for all needs; the rest of the pages remained in the company's storehouse and never came to light.

Hopeless work, if *positively* hopeless, was turned down by this particular company. But in most cases the company contracted for hopeless MSS. under the agreement that they would be edited and made salable. That was my job—to rewrite hopeless trash into something that "might sell."

I might add that, in addition to the letters Blythe received, there is a follow-up letter—about three months after the author has claimed that he "cannot afford to publish his work under such terms." It reduces the price about half, in most cases—but it is generally not necessary, for the author invariably writes to say he hasn't the necessary amount of money, but "will the company consider about half that price?" The company replies that they can give him a much less imposing book for half price, without jacket or illustrations. Which saves the company considerable money, of course—and doesn't discourage the author at all.

Boston is not the only home of the Elite companies, of course. Many are found elsewhere. There is, however, a definite group of them in Boston, all thriving. I was in a Boston second-hand store only recently, when the president of my old sucker company came in with an armful of books, sold them for ten cents, and went out to get a cup of coffee for his lunch.

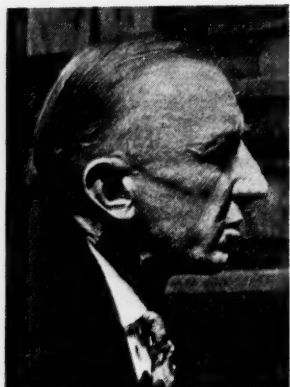
The Elite Publishing Company is still in business. It will probably continue to be in business for some time to come. The book-sellers and better business bureaus are hacking away at it, but with little effect.

For every sucker who learns a lesson, there are two waiting to take his place. Man continues to be "altogether vanity."



Action

BY J. ALBERT MALLORY



J. Albert Mallory

from beginning to end, and he showed me the story to prove it. Here is what the first two thousand words contained:

Conversation between the aviator hero and his boss in which it was shown that a telegram had been received saying that a plane had crossed the border loaded with dope and must be stopped, and that the only ship available for the hero to fly was one belonging to the son of the owner of the airport. This was followed by a scene in which the owner's son arrived in an automobile and began abusing a grease monkey who was working on his plane and was slapped in the face by the hero.

The editor said the action did not start until that blow was struck. He was right. The author had made the mistake of confusing *movement* with action. There was a lot of excitement in those first two thousand words, the characters talked in short, sharp sentences and they moved rapidly. But there was no action until that blow was struck because the real story was of a conflict between the hero and the son and because, in fiction writing, the word action has come to have a definite meaning, and that meaning differs from the dictionary definition of the word.

Every trade and profession has its own technical terms which usage makes standard. The word "shaft" does not mean the same

A FRIEND of mine who makes his living writing stories had a manuscript returned with a note from the editor to the effect that there was no action in the first two thousand words. My friend said the editor was a fool, that his story was nothing but action

thing to the miner it does to the architect. A "brace" to a carpenter is not what it is to a sailor. One craft borrows a term from another and gives it an entirely different meaning, then a few authorities use the term and it becomes standardized. Editors of action magazines are standardizing the word action and it behooves the writer to learn exactly what an editor means when he says a story lacks action. It is vitally necessary for a writer to know that when an editor refers to action he has in mind something different than the jockey who speaks of the action of a horse or the mechanic who refers to the action of pistons.

ACTION, in fiction, means a definite, visible, physical, manifestation of conflict.

A colt running aimlessly around a field is, to the horseman, displaying rapid action, but to the fiction writer such a manifestation is merely movement. The colt goes into action only when he is pitted against an antagonist in a race. Action, to the fictionist, means what it does to the man-o-wars man and the soldier. There is plenty of feverish movement on a ship when the order is passed to clear decks *for action*," but the action itself starts only when the fight starts. Troops may march for days and suffer all kinds of hardships, but they "go into action" only when they begin to fight the enemy.

Much of the misunderstanding of what constitutes action is due to a misconception of what a story is. Fundamentally a story is a report of a conflict, a battle, a fight. There never was a good story that was anything else and it does not matter whether the story be one of outdoor adventure or of subtle character analysis or a sophisticated sex story. If it is not a fight that is manifested in physical action it is not a story. This talk of "mental action" in a story is just pure bunk.

You can tell a story by reporting physical action and in no other way. Physical action

is, or at least is supposed to be, the result of a mental process. (Though some of the actions of characters in pulp fiction seem to be reflex.) An intense mental conflict may be taking place within the mind of a character, but it becomes visible only when it is manifested physically. A story is a series of visible images. It is not a sequence of abstract ideas, and even Henry James could not make it so. Your story must be visualized by your reader and that means it is up to you to present it to him in concrete pictures. You cannot photograph an emotion, you can only picture its physical manifestations.

WE would be further along in an understanding of story structure if we substituted the word "actors" for the word "characters" in our terminology. The business of an actor is to act. The movie director has learned that it is not necessary to make a picture composed entirely of fist fights, gun plays and hair pullings. He gives lots of footage to close-ups of his characters' faces and those faces are "registering emotions," that is, they are portraying physically and visibly the conflict that is taking place in the mind. But no director is foolish enough to think he can tell a story by putting one actor's face in front of a camera and then photographing the various muscular reactions to an inner, mental conflict. The close-up is effective only as it is contrasted with other visible manifestations of the conflict.

An emotion is a reaction to a physical stimulus. If the emotion is strong enough to get to the surface so that it can be seen or heard the fictionist can represent it concretely. If it cannot be represented concretely it is not fiction material.

Too many of us spend a great deal of time depicting the feverish movement of "clearing decks for action" and then back out just as the battle opens. The ship must be prepared for action, the troops must be brought up to the front line, the stage must be set and the actors brought on, but most of that preparatory work can be done before the curtain goes up. A play starts when the actors begin to act, not when Props begins to set the stage.

When you hear a writer trying to justify lack of action by talking about "conditions precedent" that must be established you may know that writer has not yet mastered his

craft. Actors, prize fighters, and race horses do their training before the box office opens. Editors are eager to buy the yarns of writers who open their stories after the decks are cleared and the action has begun, and who keep their characters in action until the enemy is defeated.

If a writer plans his story properly, conditions precedent will take care of themselves. If the problem is stated in the very beginning, the nature of that problem will determine the setting and the kind of people who must carry on the conflict. The reader will get to know all he needs to know or wants to know about them as he watches them in action—but it must be action and not mere movement.

But to establish the word action as meaning a visible manifestation of conflict is not enough. It must refer not to conflict in general, but to the specific conflict in the particular story under discussion.

The report of an incident in one story may be action and the same incident in another story may be only movement. It depends entirely on the particular problem that vitalizes a particular plot. Suppose it is a war story and the job of the hero is to clean up a certain machine-gun nest. It is obvious that such a story must consist of the incidents of the conflict caused by the hero's definite attempt to overcome the opposition of the enemy. Any opposition that is not definite enemy opposition to prevent the hero from solving his problem cannot produce action. The hero's struggles through the mud and darkness to get to the front line, his hiding in shell holes and near-annihilation in an air raid, no matter how graphically described, are not action and do not belong in this story, because they are not the result of a definite, intelligent opposition to his attempt to solve the particular problem. The machine gunner did not put the mud there nor send over the airplane, therefore such incidents are not manifestations of the conflict between the hero and the machine gunner—they are not action.

But suppose the job of the hero is to overcome his innate cowardice and prove himself a man in the eyes of his comrades. The final solution will be his capture of the machine gunner. The conflict here will be different because the problem is different. This will be one of those "mental conflicts" and the only way it can be shown is to report the hero's physical reactions to physical con-

ditions. The mud, darkness, and airplane all being in this story, they become allies of, tangible manifestations of, the fear that it is his job to overcome. When he is fighting fear, and the mud is an ally of fear, to report his struggles in the mud is to depict the conflict, to report action.

What in the first story was only movement, and movement that would retard the narrative, in the second becomes important action. We often make the blunder of writing movement instead of action by losing sight of the main problem. There is a largely circulated text-book on story writing that says obstacles introduced into the course of events make plot. That is not so. What makes plot is conflict caused by intelligent opposition to the solution of a specific problem. No one thinks he can write a story by describing a man running around a race track. But there are many who appear to think that event can be made into a story by the simple expedient of having the man jump a few hurdles. It cannot be done no matter how high the hurdles may be. Even if the hurdles stand up and slap the man in the face it is still not a story because there is no problem to solve and the lively hurdles are not motivated by an intelligent opposition. But if the man's job is to smash a record and every obstacle has been placed there by someone who is trying to prevent him from smashing that record, then his

struggle becomes not movement, but action. The overcoming of obstacles becomes action only when they are obstacles to the solution of the particular problem and exist for that single purpose.

In "To Build a Fire," Jack London has just one human character. The man's job is to build a fire in order to save his life. He is opposed by the intense cold. The story is a description of his attempt to light a fire, and there is not a line in it that is not packed full of action. The conflict between the man and the arctic cold is very intense. So far as that particular story is concerned, the cold exists for the sole purpose of destroying the man—and it does.

EVERY good story is really an action story, even "The Fall of the House of Usher," which has been called a story of atmosphere, and Stevenson's "Markheim," which has been called a psychological story. In the former the atmosphere of gloom, which Poe so carefully and artistically created, is as definitely the intelligent, physical manifestation of the opposing force as is the cold in London's story. In the latter, in order to make a story at all, Stevenson was compelled to personify and make visible Markheim's other self—otherwise the conflict would not have been visible and there would have been no story.



STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE

By C. WILES HALLOCK

I KNOW a girl who writes (and sells!)
Entrancing, tripping villanelles. . .

Deft, dainty lines with lilting strains
And piquant, echoing refrains. . .

A rondeau, idyll, ode or ballad—
A sonnet—amorous or pallid—

Such things she cannot do so well;
But she can pen a villanelle—

A subtle test in taking pains!
O, don't you love those cute refrains

That sort of leap from scene to scene
Like—O, well, you know what I mean. . .

Or do you? . . . Never mind. . . She sells
(Can you imagine?) *Villanelles*. . .

In this here day and age! Nell's Bells!

How to Write a Detective Story

BY EDWIN BAIRD

Editor of Real Detective Tales

(This series began in the December, 1929, issue)

XI—HAS THE NEW WRITER A CHANCE?



Edwin Baird

SOMEWHERE in this lengthening series of articles I have mentioned, briefly, the common complaint of all young writers: "The new writer has no chance." And I have tried to point out that he has every chance—a better chance, in fact, than the writer of established repu-

tation.

That my words have fallen on skeptical ears is proved by the letters I receive from those whose offerings are declined—new and unpublished authors.

"If you are really sincere," they triumphantly ask, "why is it that your magazine carries the same contributors, month after month?"

At first thought, it might seem there is soundness in this argument. Every magazine, including my own, has the same lineup of names on its contents page in almost every issue. Rarely does a new name appear thereon.

But on second thought, after a moment's calm reflection, the reason for this is painfully clear: It is not that the editor doesn't want fresh talent; it's because he cannot find any. He and his readers eagerly scan the incoming mail, hoping against hope that something good may therein be found; and almost always their hopes are blasted. The manuscripts assay nearly 100 per cent dross.

If an editor—any editor—were to depend exclusively on this material (unsolicited manuscripts voluntarily submitted by unknown writers) he would be forced to suspend publication. In order to survive, there-

fore, he must depend on such writers as can give him the sort of thing he needs. Hence the same contributors in every issue of his magazine.

The new writer won't believe this, but it's nevertheless true that an editor—and again I mean *any* editor—would far rather accept a manuscript than reject one. It is equally true—and this, also, will seem unbelievable to the new writer—that when the editor writes a letter accepting a "first" story, his delight is greater than the author's, profound though the author's delight may be when he reads the editor's letter.

But how seldom this happens! Since this series started (nearly a year ago, God help us!) many thousands of manuscripts have passed across my desk; and in that vast avalanche I haven't found enough acceptable "first" stories to count on the fingers of one hand!

This, I assure you, isn't an exceptional situation. Unless I mistake, the same distress obtains in every publishing house in the land. The same manuscripts keep going the rounds of all the various magazines. And they all go through the same process: They are checked in, are looked over by the editor or his readers, and are checked out, to take up their weary travels again.

ALL the foregoing paragraphs may seem bitterly discouraging to the new writer; and if he has mistaken his calling—as so many have—the quicker he is discouraged, the better. If, however, he really knows how to write and has something worth writing about, he should feel encouraged to go ahead; for his work, by contrast with that of his inferiors, will seem even better than it actually is!

I have already outlined in these pages some of the many reasons why manuscripts are refused by editors; and I need only add that the chief reason is their total lack of

reader interest. Too many manuscripts—almost all of those by new writers—read as if their authors were bored by writing them. And you may be quite sure that if it bores you to write a story, it's going to bore the person who tries to read it. The reader can get no more out of a story than the writer puts into it. He seldom gets as much!

Although it's a fact that perhaps less than one-tenth of one per cent of the manuscripts voluntarily sent to a magazine are accepted for publication, no author of a story worth reading need despair of its being read by the public. If it's worth reading, it's worth accepting, and, soon or late, accepted it will be. Its fate cannot be otherwise!

There is always the possibility, of course, that such a story will be declined by a magazine, or even by half a dozen or more, but if it has merit it will land somewhere. If, however, your story keeps coming back to you, until finally you've exhausted every market, it's a safe bet there is something radically wrong with it. Better tear it up and start another.

WHAT I've said here about the new writer and his chance of being published is particularly true of the all-fiction magazines, commonly known as the wood-pulps, since these magazines are more interested in stories than in names, but it is also true, though perhaps in lesser degree, of their slick-paper brethren. These so-called "quality magazines" are fond of featuring "big names" on their pretty-girl covers, yet many of them employ associate editors, known as scouts, whose sole job is to smell out new writers and round them up for the boss.

Their usual hunting ground is the wood-pulp field. They watch these magazines with a zealous eye, eagerly scanning their contents for something outstanding, and when they discern a writer of unusual promise, they go after him in a business-like way, with flattering offers and alluring contracts. Which may explain why so many of our authors, whose names are nationally known today, got their initial start in the pulp-paper periodicals.

More important, however, it demonstrates that the editors are seeking new writers just as eagerly as new writers are seeking the editors.

The trouble with the writers is that they often do their hunting in the wrong way.

Of late, many of them have formed the habit of first querying an editor before submitting their manuscripts. They will write, or even telegraph, a question such as this:

"Do you care to read a story dealing with gangsters and racketeering in Detroit? If so, state the number of words you prefer and the amount you will pay."

An editor hesitates to answer a letter like that. If he does answer it, the writer will invariably construe his answer as an order for the story; and in the event the story is declined, all manner of trouble may ensue. I recall the case of a young writer in Wisconsin who wrote me concerning a story of his, which he felt sure was suited to *Real Detective Tales*, asking if I'd like to see it. I replied that I was always glad to see stories.

The story came, was read, and rejected. Immediately there came a sizzling letter from this writer, demanding to know by what right I had returned a manuscript which had been definitely ordered by me, and threatening to expose my crooked dealing. Strangely enough, his blazing indignation seemed quite genuine.

Of course, there is only one way to break into print with your first story, and that is to write a story that is worth printing and send it by mail to an editor. It isn't necessary to write a preliminary letter of interrogation. It isn't even necessary to send a letter with the story. Let the story speak for itself.

Perhaps it is true that no editor knows exactly what he wants till he sees it; yet every editor, I think, has a pretty well defined idea of what he should get for his magazine, and as he reads manuscripts this idea is usually uppermost in his mind. When he encounters something that seems to square with that idea he doesn't hesitate long in accepting it.

Thus, if you're aiming your product at a specific magazine, you should first determine what type of material especially appeals to its editor, and then send him that type and nothing else. You can easily ascertain this by studying his editorial content.

If you can learn something of his personal likes and dislikes, his pet prejudices and eccentricities, your chance of "selling him" may be increased. These things, too, you may discover by an intensive study of

his magazine. In most cases—though not all—a magazine mirrors its editor's personality.

And, make no mistake about it, we editors do have prejudices. At the moment mine include jade gods, idols stolen from Buddhist temples, gangsters who take the "hot seat" for bumping off other gangsters (of all the hundreds of gang killings in Chicago and elsewhere, I have yet to hear of anybody being electrocuted for one), the private detective who makes a boob of the chief of police, the Scotland Yard detective story (invariably a dull, stupid affair), the murderer who swiftly confesses when confronted with evidence of his guilt (they never do this in real life), the "master mind" who solves his cases by stumbling blindly on important clues, suspicious butlers (who always turn out to be innocent), wooden

characters who talk like the dummies of ventriloquists (nine stories in ten have them), Irish police sergeants who use a brogue never heard outside a burlesque show, glorified bootleggers and heroic rum-runners (there is nothing heroic in these vermin), and half a dozen or more rubber-stamp plots, notably those dealing with mysterious Orientals who trace a sacred vase half way round the world and kill the person who owns it, and the woman, dressed in man's clothing, who betrays her sex by spreading her knees apart to catch an object tossed to her by the shrewd and discerning detective. A sizeable array. But in every case my prejudice is due to an encounter with these things in my manuscript mail, over and over again.

Which is another reason why new writers complain they haven't any chance.

(To be continued)



The Socratic Method of Plot-Building

BY EDGAR MITCHELL BOYDEN

PERHAPS you are one of those writers—I am one of them—who fret and fume and get headaches from the necessary preliminary work of putting a story idea into a plot. Despite the many plots I have concocted, the building of a plot is as much a mystery to me today as it was twelve years ago when I first read William Archer's "Playmaking."

I think the chief difficulty has been, and is with many other writers who can write it once they get the skeleton built, that planning in one's mind is a very complicated process. The plot structure of a story is comparable to a mathematical problem. You would not attempt to work trigonometry in your head, would you?

Why not, then, think on paper?

One night I had been having a terrific time with a story I was planning to get off on a specific date. I absolutely could not get my idea simplified for the 3000 words in which it had to be written. At last, in deep despair, I sat down at the typewriter. I began talking to myself something in this wise:

"Now, we have at least a main proposition. We know that this story must demonstrate the effect, twelve years afterward, on three persons, of the death of one man in the World War. What, in your opinion, is the best way to do this?"

"Well, you have given three characters: the man's mother, the man's wife, his 13-year-old son. Logic demands, does it not, that in a story of the length you have prescribed your effect cannot be shown equally among three characters? Then, we must select one character upon whom the brunt of the demonstration must lie. Perhaps this can be done by the elimination process. The boy, 13 years old, is too young to show to the fullest the effect of his father's death. The mother is possibly too old; you have with her a complication of emotions, including that of old age. The widow, though, could be used to show with striking effect the hopelessness that follows war, because she is supposedly in her years of womanly maturity and this devastation of soul is abnormal and shocking. It would seem, then, that she is your central character."

"You seem to have proved that the widow is our central character; the others must be supplementary. Now, since that is decided, we must have a single incident to be developed to show this devastation caused by war and her husband's death. . . ." And so on.

You have no idea how this rattling dialogue cleared the atmosphere; it brought the

problem out of thin air and put it in a place where it could be fought with, and, as a result, I worked out a fairly creditable plot where I had nothing but a vague idea.

I believe it is a suggestion that might prove helpful to other writers for whom Plot Construction is an ogre.



OVER 867,000 WORDS OF FICTION A MONTH USED BY THIS MARKET

Fiction House, Inc., 220 E. Forty-second Street, New York, incorporates the following interesting information, which gives some idea of the scope of the all-fiction market, of which its magazines are a part, in a recent issue of its bulletin, *Fiction House Flashes*.

THE majority of those who make writing a paying proposition are keenly aware of the editorial law of supply and demand. They understand that when an editor says, "Bought up on this type," he is giving a sound reason for the return of the yarn. The individual writer cannot, of course, control a situation of this sort, but he can, by using his head, make it apply only infrequently to his stories. Writing for a living isn't a haphazard, shot-in-the-dark business to those who use sound judgment in approaching it.

Said judgment is made up of knowing how to write, what to write, and when to write it.

By taking a look at the inside working of the Fiction House magazines the *what* and *when* becomes apparent. We use a certain number of stories each month. This number is divided into various types to suit our magazines. To get down to cases:

Action Stories uses each month:

- 1 Complete Western Novel, 25,000 words.
- 1 Adventure Novelette, 12,000 words.
- 3 Western Shorts, 6000 words or less.
- 3 Action-Adventure Shorts, 6000 words or less.

Air Stories and Wings use:

- 2 Air-Adventure Novels, 25,000 words.
- 2 Air-Adventure Novelettes, 10,000 words.
- 2 Air Serials, 10,000 words per installment
- 8 Air Shorts, 6000 words or less.
- 2 Hangar Yarns, 2000 words.

Acres uses:

- 3 War-Air Novels, 15,000 to 25,000 words.
- 2 War-Air Fact Articles, 2,000 words.

Lariat Story Magazine uses:

- 1 Complete Cowboy Western Novel, 25,000 words.
- 1 Cowboy Novelette, 10,000 words.
- 1 Western-Action Serial, 10,000 words per installment.
- 5 Western Shorts, 6000 words or less.
- 1 Chuck Wagon Yarn, 2000 words.

Frontier Stories uses:

- 1 Complete Frontier Western Novel, 25,000 words.
- 1 Complete Frontier West Novelette, 10,000 words.
- 4 Western Shorts, 6000 words or less.
- 1 Western Fact Article, 10,000 words.

Fight Stories uses:

- 2 Life-Story Serials, 10,000 words per installment.
- 1 Famous Fight, 5,000 words.
- 6 Fight Shorts, 6000 words or less.

North-West Stories uses:

- 1 Complete Western Novel, 25,000 words, or 1 Complete Northern Novel, 25,000 words.
- 1 Western (or North) Novelette, 10,000 words.
- 1 Western (or North) Serial, 10,000 words per installment.
- 3 Western Shorts, 6000 words or less.
- 2 Northern Shorts, 6000 words or less.
- 1 Northern Trail Tale, 2000 words.

Action Novels uses:

- 2 Complete Western Novels, 20,000 to 25,000 words.
- 2 Complete Adventure Novels, 15,000 to 20,000 words.

Love Romances uses:

- 1 Complete Novel, 20,000 words.
- 1 Complete Novelette, 12,000 words.
- 7 Short Stories, 6000 words or less.

Detective Book Magazine and Detective Classics use:

- 2 Complete Detective Novels, 65,000 words.
- 4 Detective Shorts, 5000 words.

We must purchase this amount of copy every thirty days to get our magazines down to press. The writing man who knows his business calls his shots before he starts to write. He knows that we use a certain number of stories of a certain length and type, and gauges his production for our market accordingly. If he feels that a Western Novel is the next thing coming up, he writes in advance, telling us something about it, asking if our market is open. If we are bought up on novels he can switch off to something we need more quickly. The man who pays the butcher and baker with magazine checks knows that stories filed away pay no dividends. He knows the advantages of quick turn-over, and how to get it.

It is obvious from the above that Western shorts are bought more frequently than any other type. Always a sound bet with us. At the same time, remember that we read plenty of them each month. Therefore our demands are for novelty in plot and characterization. We've read all the old ones.

We use fourteen complete novels every month, which is a tip-off that we are always keen to find a writer who can turn out good feature lengths.

And don't forget the short novelette. A sweet length when you're telling a fast-action yarn that is too heavy in plot for a short.

Editors You Want to Know

This Series began in the July, 1929, issue.

FARNSWORTH WRIGHT

Editor of Wierd Tales

(By E. H. PRICE)



Farnsworth Wright

"FIRST of all," declared Farnsworth Wright as he shooed from the editorial rooms of *Wierd Tales* a handful of loitering ghouls, vampires, and ghosts, "I insist upon there being a story. Authors only too often confuse story material or story setting with the story

itself. The transplanting of a human brain into the skull of an ape would be an interesting surgical experiment; but a tale based on such a feat is acceptable only when the results of the transplanting are dramatic and striking.

"The pseudo-scientific story which is now so much in demand must do more than outline a fanciful invention or process entirely beyond the reach of present scientific achievement. The author must develop a plot which derives its major interest not from the pseudo-scientific principle itself but from an ingenious solution based on a startling application of that principle.

"Tales which carry the hero to distant planets come to my desk by the score. But in most cases the characters, after having been projected into interstellar space, experience commonplace adventures they could much more readily have found on earth.

"Ghost stories of the right kind are welcomed; but we invariably reject those which describe nothing but the terror inspired by the mere appearance of a ghost. These are old fashioned. When Sir Walter Scott wrote 'The Tapestry Chamber,' he gave a splendid example of a ghost story in which noth-

ing happened except that someone was frightened almost to death because he saw a ghost. If a ghost story is to make the grade, it must possess motivation and characterization rather than be a rubber-stamped catalogue of wails, apparitions, and clammy hands.

"Again, a wierd tale must be convincing. Because we use stories that are frankly impossible, authors are surprised when their work is rejected as not being plausible. The point is that while a concededly impossible hypothesis can be accepted by the reader, the story is satisfying only if the sequence of events based on the impossible is logical and consistent. We can accept a ghost, a vampire, or an evil spirit only when unusual and dramatic action rather than mere presence is the substance of the story. The supernatural as such is by no means adequate; and since we deal with the impossible, it is all the more necessary that they should be convincing; that they should *seem* real.

"We have printed tales of vampires vividly and humanly characterized instead of being obscured by a time-worn litany of garlic and holly sprigs; and we have presented stories whose point was not the personal appearance of Satan, but rather his unusual reaction to a startling and dramatic situation. There were truly great wierd tales, which, through their scarcity, are always in demand.

"Finally, our ideal is the presentation of a story having literary value. Very often we accept a tale which though not emphasizing the wierd, the supernatural, or the pseudo-scientific, merits approval on account of its rich color, exquisite workmanship, bizarre philosophy, and strong plot."

Now let us turn from quotation to a sketch of the man himself:

Farnsworth Wright tumbled into the magazine business before he was out of grammar school in San Francisco, where he not only wrote and edited a publication called *"The Laurel,"* but set the type and printed it on a hand press, being editor, author, printer's devil, compositor, and pressman.

During his last two semesters in college he was managing editor of the University of Washington *Daily*. After graduation he was a reporter for the Chicago *Tribune*, and the Chicago *Herald-Examiner*, and later, music critic of the last named. He then left the newspaper game to edit a magazine called *Health*, whose brief career was soon ended by the untimely death of the publisher.

While occupied as reporter and editor, Wright was selling stories to *Munsey's* and other magazines. When *Wierd Tales* made its appearance, he sold material which appeared in its initial issues; and later, he read manuscripts for both *Wierd Tales* and *Detective Tales*. Shortly thereafter, when the Popular Fiction Publishing Company took over *Wierd Tales*, he became publisher. He is now launching a new magazine, *Oriental Stories*.

Thus, baldly sketched, we have his history. But those who have heard its ups and downs from Wright himself when coffee and cigars follow dinner at Le Petit Gourmet, not far from the editorial rooms on Michigan Boulevard, can best understand why "Pious Plato" goes to such pains to encourage promising beginners: for in each begin-

ner Wright sees himself again fighting his way from ham and eggs. Personal rejections, accompanied by bits of constructive criticism, have made of a good many beginners prime members of Wright's circle of chronic contributors. Wright, the editor, is first and last the friend of the author.

Wright served during the World War as an interpreter in the A. E. F. His repertoire, in addition to French, includes Spanish, German, Italian, and a touch of Russian: all of which is an outcropping of his taste for the foreign and colorful. Kouskous, pilau, and East Indian curry are his favorite dishes; Latakia and Darjeeling suit his tastes, respectively, in tobacco and tea; and when he's thirsty . . . well, he mixes an unusually fragrant drink with Bacardi, limes, and pineapple juice as the basic principles.

As to his personal appearance: a cubistic painter has given us a portrait which depicts Wright as the editor of a ghoulish magazine should, but does not look.

Finally, his favorite weakness must be mentioned: limericks!

"Farnsworth, recite the one about the young man from Bombay."



A Lesson in Persistence

The Biography of an Amateur's Short-Story

BY GODFREY ALLEN

I BEGAN writing fiction in the winter of 1926-1927. The following is the biography of one of my first stories. Besides throwing light on the vagaries—kindly and otherwise—of editors, it demonstrates graphically the value of persistence in the marketing of manuscripts.

MAGAZINE	DATE SENT	DATE OF REPLY
<i>Pictorial Review</i>	2/11/27	2/16/27
Slip. In the early days of my writing I always sent my stories to <i>Pictorial Review</i> first, because it invariably replied so promptly. The fact that a slip always accompanied their reply failed to daunt me.		
<i>Good Housekeeping</i>	2/16/27	3/11/27
Slip. But they kept it nearly a month, and, being but a neophyte, I was sure that meant something.		
<i>Holland's</i>	3/11/27	3/29/27
Slip.		

<i>The Farmer's Wife</i>	3/29/27	4/29/27
Slip. But later I sold them something.		
<i>Country Gentlemen</i>	4/30/27	5/8/27
Slip.		
<i>Mother's Home Life</i>	5/10/17	5/14/27
Slip. I was already beginning to waver. Badly, too, to be willing to offer my story to a magazine that pays only ¼ cent a word.		
<i>Youth's Companion</i>	5/15/27	5/27/27
Slip. I was beginning to think that perhaps the story might be a juvenile. The amateur is never quite sure what he has written after he has finished it.		
<i>Torchbearer</i>	6/5/27	7/8/27
Letter. My first letter on this manuscript—and one of my first on any. The editor was kind enough to say that the story had been read "with a great deal of interest and pleasure. I am returning it to you, however, because the characters and the style of the story are somewhat too mature for our readers." This editor asked to see more material, and bought the next story I sent her. Since then her name has been a byword and a blessing in our home.		

MAGAZINE	DATE SENT	REPLY
<i>Children (Parents' Magazine)</i>	7/8/27	7/22/27
Slip. I reasoned that if the story wouldn't interest children, it might interest their parents, but evidently the theory was unsound.		
<i>People's Home Journal</i>	9/18/27	10/6/27
Letter. "Sorry that this won't do for us." Which is really not nearly as good a note as Mrs. Charlton usually wrote.		
<i>American Needlewoman</i>	10/6/27	10/11/27
Letter. "We are returning enclosed manuscript of your story which we are sorry to state we do not find in all ways available for our use." My files are bulging with big blue letters from this magazine worded just like that. But after three years of such personality-brimming mis-sives they finally sent me a check.		
<i>Comfort</i>	10/11/27	10/16/27
Slip.		
<i>Successful Farming</i>	10/17/27	11/4/27
Slip.		
<i>Farmer's Wife</i>	11/5/27	11/15/27
Slip. Yes, I tried it a second time. In three instances this scheme has worked; that is, the editor who had rejected a story the first time, bought it the second. Usually, however, it is unwise to repeat without revision.		
<i>Women's Home Companion</i>	11/29/27	12/3/27
Slip. For some reason, I suddenly decided to aim higher. No use.		
<i>Modern Priscilla</i>	12/4/27	12/8/27
Letter. "We are returning your story at once, so that you may not be delayed in submitting it elsewhere." As it had already been out sixteen times, I wasn't especially interested in the elsewhere.		
<i>McCall's</i>	12/9/27	1/12/28
Slip.		
<i>Christian Endeavor World</i>	1/13/28	1/17/28
Slip. It was possible, I thought, that it might be a religious story. Evidently not.		
<i>Woman's World</i>	1/18/28	2/11/28
Slip.		
<i>Christian Board of Publication</i>	2/21/21	2/28/28
Slip. Losing hope. I thought that since the president of my college had once been the editor-in-chief of their papers, I might have a chance.		
<i>Youth</i>	3/14/28	3/21/28
Letter. Still convinced that the story had a moral concealed in it somewhere. At any rate, this editor wrote that my story was "one of the pleasant things that make a fellow glad he's an editor." But he didn't buy it.		
<i>Our Young People</i>	4/27/28	5/16/28
Letter. Coming immediately after having been assured that my story was "one of the pleasant things that make a fellow glad he's an editor," this editor's letter saying "I can't make heads or tails out of your story," came as something of a blow. But editors are like that.		
<i>New York Sunday World</i>	5/23/28	10/31/28
Letter. Note the length of time that the manuscript was kept. A little over five months. Though I dispatched vitriolic letters to the editor, my answer was a great silence. Finally, I withdrew the story, had it retyped, and prepared to submit it elsewhere. In the course of time the		

following note came: "Sorry. Your story does not quite make the grade. I like this quite a lot, however. Should you have any other 3000-word fiction you feel is unusually good, I shall be glad to see it." During the five months I had had plenty of opportunity to write a great deal of "unusually good" fiction. This editor bought the next story that I sent.

Christian Board of Publication

MAGAZINE	DATE SENT	REPLY
<i>Christian Board of Publication</i>	10/31/28	11/23/28
Slip. This college president of mine doesn't seem to be of any use to me.		
<i>People's Popular Monthly</i>	11/26/28	1/16/29
Slip.		
<i>Christian Herald</i>	3/27/29	3/30/29
Slip.		
<i>Woman's Home Companion</i>	7/25/29	7/28/29
Letter. That slight revision which I made in the ending of the story must have been effective. Although the editor merely says, "I am sorry that we cannot use your story in the <i>Companion</i> ," I am glad that he is at least sorry.		
<i>Good Housekeeping</i>	7/28/29	8/7/29
Letter. On its twenty-ninth trip my story wins a long letter from <i>Good Housekeeping</i> saying, among other things, that the manuscript was "far better than most that come my way." But "far better" wasn't enough, so it came back to me.		
<i>High Road</i>	8/7/29	9/29/29
LOST. The adventures of this manuscript would not have been perfect without that mishap. The editor, feeling that he had lost it in his office, sent me a check for it. But honesty burned brightly within me, and I returned the \$20. Later honesty was rewarded. I retyped the story and sent it to:		
<i>The Country Gentleman</i>	10/22/29	10/29/29
Letter. And the editor calmly assures me that he is almost certain that I "will find a market for it elsewhere." But he doesn't know that it has already been out thirty-one times.		
<i>Delineator</i>	10/29/29	11/21/29
Letter. My first note from this magazine. I am told that the story is "just a little bit too flossy."		
<i>People's Home Journal</i>	12/2/29	12/12/29
Letter. Once more to Mrs. Charlton, who thanks me for submitting it—though she doesn't really mean it.		
<i>High Road</i>	12/14/29	12/12/28
Letter. Discouraged, I try <i>The High Road</i> again—the magazine that had lost it and offered to pay for it. This time I am told it is "too childish and sentimental." I must remark, though, that the editor was away at the time, and a substitute rejected the story. Mr. Chapell is a delightful person to do business with. Anyhow, with <i>The High Road</i> , paying but ½¢ a word, turning down the story, I considered the end near at hand. But persistence made me try once more.		
<i>The Household Magazine</i>	1/8/30	1/28/30
CHECK—\$150! "It has delightful characters . . . I enclose our check. . . . Won't you send me a glossy photograph of yourself. . . ." Anything! Thirty-five trips, and sold for \$150. And now may it appear in the O'Brien collection!		

THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST'S LITERARY MARKET TIPS GATHERED MONTHLY FROM AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES

All-Fiction, 100 Fifth Avenue, New York, is a new monthly magazine of the Dell Publishing Company, under the editorship of Carson W. Mowre, who writes: "Fiction for this new magazine should be red-blooded action and adventure yarns with any locale. They should start with an interest-compelling opening, taking a breath to build up characterization and locale, then get back into action again. Above all, the writer must know the locales and types he writes about. At present we are well bought up on African and South Sea material. Short-stories up to 6000 words, novelettes up to 12,000, and novels up to 25,000 are used—no serials. We will use soldier-of-fortune articles up to 4000 words, articles on customs of foreign lands, or anything of interest to readers that like foreign sets; occasional verse of the out-trails, and fillers up to 100 words. There will be an anecdote prize contest in each issue. Payment is on acceptance at 1½ cents a word up." This magazine has been substituted for the Western magazine projected by the Dell company some time ago. It will use some Western fiction, in line with its policy to include any interesting locale.

Whittlesey House, 370 Seventh Avenue, New York, is the name adopted by the McGraw-Hill Book Company in entering the field of general non-fiction publishing. The company in the past has confined its activities to technical, scientific, and business books, and will continue this policy under the McGraw-Hill imprint. The *Whittlesey House* list will include a wide variety of subjects in the fields of economics, psychology, biology, diplomacy, history, architecture, market speculation, aviation, and other phases of human knowledge. Fiction and books of pure entertainment will not be issued. The program will be in charge of Guy Holt, recently with the John Day Company.

Scotland Yard, 100 Fifth Avenue, New York, one of the Dell group, now edited by Richard A. Martinsen, uses "one juicy 40,000-word novel in each issue, a 15,000-word novelette, and the rest are sensational true thrillers or 6000-word maximum shorts. Gang stuff is used only where the sleuth hands it to the gangsters in the neck. Mystery or horror stuff—grand—where the sleuth makes good. Amateur sleuths, intentional or by chance, also are good for heroes. An especial want is sleuths doing their stuff in France, Germany, Tibet, or the Antarctic, so long as the yarns are written with good old American action biff-and-bang." Payment is at 1½ cents a word up. *Scotland Yard* does not use by-lines.

Swift Story Magazine, 11 W. Forty-second Street, New York, is the first of a new group of magazines to appear under the editorship of Gilbert Patten, the original Burt L. Standish and creator of the Frank Marriwell series. The Gilbert Patten Corporation has been formed to publish this series of magazines. *Swift Story* is a pocket-sized magazine, featuring mystery and detective fiction, characterized by suspense and fast action. A complete novel is used in each issue, but the best opening is for short-stories of not to exceed 5000 words. Two other magazines are projected for this group, *Pocket Magazine* and *The Dime Novel*. *Pocket Magazine* will use fiction of the *American Magazine* type, with an appeal to wage earners, and is edited for both sexes. *The Dime Novel* will use one complete story an issue, and this yarn will be written to order. Payment for material will be in the neighborhood of 2 cents a word on acceptance.

Nomad, 150 Lafayette Street, New York, desires articles on any subject that will interest a traveler. Manuscripts on various sections of the United States are particularly desired. The style should be lively and compact, and real humor will be very much appreciated. Length, about 2000 words. It is preferred that manuscripts be accompanied by good photographs, although these are not absolutely necessary. Poor photos are not wanted. The magazine is edited by Thomas Brodix and pays from 2 to 3 cents a word on publication.

Calgary Eye Opener, Box 2068, Minneapolis, Minn., is edited by Cedric Adams. Phil Rolfsen is art editor. It desires jokes, jingles, gags, wisecracks, and epigrams, also humorous short-stories up to 200 words, "with a dash of pepper." Ideas for illustrations, light verse, poetry with prison, vagabond, sob-sister angles and strong emotional appeal, are purchased. Payment for humorous contributions is at \$3 to \$15 each; cartoons, \$3 to \$10; verse, 25 cents a line up, on acceptance.

Best Love Story—Cupids, has replaced the title *Cupid's Diary* on this Dell publication issued at 100 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Prize Detective Magazine, 1133 Broadway, New York, writes: "We are not publishing during the summer months and have enough material on hand for our early fall numbers. We will not choose manuscripts until October 15th."

Radio Digest, 420 Lexington Avenue, New York, edited by Raymond Bill, writes that it is not in the market for unsolicited material.

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THOMAS H. UZZELL

Author of Stories in *The Saturday Evening Post*, etc.; former Fiction Editor of *Collier's*; author of "Narrative Technique."

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CHARLES PENVIR GORDON

Dante, Virginia

Popular Publications, Inc., the new all-fiction group comprising *Gang World*, *Battle Aces*, *Detective Action*, and *Western Rangers*, is located at 220 East Forty-second Street, New York. Through an error, the address given in the company's advertisement in our Send-it-First section for September was given as West Forty-second Street instead of East. These magazines, edited by Harry Steeger and Harold S. Goldsmith, offer prompt payment of 1 cent a word and up on acceptance for fiction within their various fields.

Broadway and Hollywood Movies, 101 W. Thirty-first Street, New York, informs a contributor that—contrary to information furnished for the A. & J. Handy Market List—it does not pay for contributions, receiving all of its material from press agents gratis.

The Homemaker, 401 Scott Street, Little Rock, Ark., uses some fiction and short articles of interest to women. "We have no fixed rate of payment for contributions," writes Mrs. F. B. Cotnam, editor.

Bohemian Magazine Company, Inc., 1841 Broadway, New York, issuing the *Burton Publications* and others under various subsidiary company names, sends the following interesting explanation of its difficulties and failure to pay writers in the past. The letter is from M. D. Bernstein, who writes: "It has been called to my attention that several items concerning *Burton Publications* have appeared in your publication, these items containing distorted statements. I am writing you to acquaint you with the true facts. . . . The Fantasy Publishing Company published several issues of *Follies* and *La Boheme* on a sub-leasing proposition, and if writers have not been taken care of for material published in these magazines, they can write our office. Most of our writers have been perfectly satisfied that we hold their manuscripts pending the resumption of these magazines, which we contemplate reviving this fall. Others have had manuscripts returned to them. We have notified writers that accounts will be adjusted soon for material that has been used. . . . Periodical Publishing Company, owner of *Self Defense*, is in the market for very little material. A very few writers have unpaid accounts with us. We are to take care of them in the very near future, and they have been so notified. . . . The Story Publishing Company, Inc., of our group, publishing *Aviation & Mechanics*, which was split into *Aviation Stories* and *Aviation Mechanics*, went through a terrible existence, due to reasons well known to the publishing trade here. Our office was practically left holding the bag, and there are small amounts due several writers for stories used in the last two issues. All other material has been returned to writers. You can notify your writers and complainants that their claims will be adjusted in the very near future, under my own direction, as they have been during the past

ten years. . . . This information is just to get your staff right concerning facts that have been grossly distorted. There are times even in the life of a publisher when conditions will arise that give him plenty of headaches. Some writers are too quick to condemn one without due cause, or without first finding the true conditions. . . . The Fantasy Publishing Company, which also owns and publishes *Real Smart Story* and *Nifty Story*, can be addressed by writers if they have complaints for material unpaid for in *Follies* and *La Boheme*. The address is Robert J. Boyle, 25 W. Forty-third Street, New York." In another letter, with reference to specific claims, Mr. Bernstein writes: "At present the corporation is practically without funds to meet these obligations, but with the resuming of publication this fall all accounts will be paid. This I assure you." . . . THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST is unable to see in what respect it published distorted statements concerning the facts above mentioned. The statements have been simply that the magazines of this group have not been meeting their obligations to pay writers for manuscripts purchased. We very much hope that all accounts will be squared, as Mr. Bernstein promises in the above letter.

The Christian, A Journal of Progressive Religion, Kansas City, Mo., desires brief, simple poems, 4 to 12 lines, which should be sent direct to the verse editor, Nora B. Cunningham, Chanute, Kans. No payment is made.

Alfred H. King, Inc., 432 Fourth Avenue, New York, is a book publishing firm issuing new fiction.

Man Stories is the title of the new adventure magazine launched by the Metropolitan Publishers, 537 S. Dearborn Street, Chicago, who also issue *Two Gun Stories*. *Man Stories* is subtitled All Adventure. The first issue, October, contains adventure stories laid in foreign lands, a prize fight story, a war story, a southern swamp story, a pearl-fisher story, a navy yarn, a coast-guard smuggling story and a London crime story. Rates paid for material, it is assumed, will be similar to those paid by *Two Gun Stories*—in the neighborhood of 1 cent a word on acceptance.

Fawcett Publications announce their removal on October 1 from Robbinsdale, Minn., to 529 S. Seventh Street, Minneapolis, Minn. The Fawcett publications include *Triple-X-Western Magazine*, *Battle Stories*, *True Confessions*, *Screen Secrets*, and *Modern Mechanics*.

Far East Adventure Stories, 158 W. Tenth Street, New York, N. Y., edited by Wallace R. Bamber, makes an announcement of especial interest to new writers. Commencing with its December issue, it will publish, every month, a short-story by a new author who has never before appeared in print. The magazine is devoted to fiction laid in the Orient, Philippines, South Sea Islands, etc., and pays from 1 cent a word up on acceptance.

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The Rotarian, 211 W. Wacker Drive, Chicago, announces that a typographical and editorial reorganization has created a new special-article market. Originally a house organ for Rotary clubs, the magazine has developed into a monthly of constructive opinion and entertainment. The editors write: "Our greatest editorial problem is securing enough articles that grip, articles that humanize the abstract principles of ethics in business, personal integrity, and international goodwill. We want: (1) Well-reasoned controversial opinion on timely subjects such as business practices, uses of leisure time, convict treatment, social welfare, education, crime prevention, and the arts. (2) Authoritative interpretations of international and domestic affairs; and trends in social policies; the press, churches and schools, architecture, science, psychology, advertising, sports, theatre, national defense, and life and customs in various lands. (3) Human-interest stories of men and concerns that have successfully put into operation the principles of fair play, honesty and goodwill which all decent business men preach and many practice. Many manuscripts come to our desk, but few qualify. We prefer articles of 1500 to 1800 words. All manuscripts will receive prompt and careful attention. Payment is made at a rate that compares with that of other American magazines."

Your Job, Reliance Building, Kansas City, Mo., is announced as a forthcoming magazine to be edited by M. N. Bunker. It will be devoted to vocational subjects and will be looking for some fiction and some feature articles on the choice of vocations, Mr. Bunker writes. "The magazine will be launched at first as a quarterly, but may be converted into a monthly with the December issue. We will pay something for manuscripts but at the start it will not be more than $\frac{1}{4}$ cent a word in most instances. We would pay 1 or 2 cents a word for the right articles, but do not expect to find very many of those."

Sweetheart Stories, 100 Fifth Avenue, New York, one of the Dell group, edited by Dorothy F. Grinnell, writes: "What we need now is heavily plotted, melodramatic stuff, with a mystery angle." These stories, of course, should have strong love interest. Payment is at from 1 to 2 cents a word on acceptance.

The United States Civil Service Commission announces an open competitive examination for agricultural writer (radio). Obtain information from the commission at Washington, D. C., or the local secretary of Civil Service examiners at any post office or customhouse. Competitors are rated on education and experience, specimens of writings for broadcasting or publication, and a practical test. They must have a bachelor's degree in agricultural or industrial journalism or equivalent education.

Babyhood, Marion, Ind., has passed into a receivership. Clifford Hunt, 508 Glass Block, Marion, Ind., is receiver.

Sky Riders, 100 Fifth Avenue, New York, is "starved" for material, writes Richard A. Martinsen, who succeeds R. Martini as executive editor. "The book at present has no inventory whatever. This means no waiting, prompt action, and plenty of cooperation toward revision if you're within machine-gun distance of the mark. Each issue uses one 20,000-word world-war and one 20,000-word air-adventure novelette. A couple of thousand words either way don't matter, but the yarns have got to start with action and gallop all the way. The locale of the fighting novelette can be anywhere a trace of the world war was, and the locale of the other can be anywhere at all. Woman, kid, or animal interest is okay by us. The heroes don't have to stay suspended in the air—so long as there's enough plane-stuff here and there to keep the sky atmosphere. The main thing to remember is that these stories require the old fire-exit slogan in reverse: 'Run, don't walk, to the nearest climax.' The same thing applies to the shorts, which are 6000 *maximum*, and also 50-50 general adventure and world-war. Sea pilots, pearl pirates, yarns from the German, Austrian, Turkish viewpoint—anything that's different and peppy—is the stuff to ring the bell. We're also keen for sensational true features, 1000 to 1500 words, written so they'll boil with 'dramer,' a la Hearst Sunday feature, and backed up with camera art. If your yarn doesn't hop up and clip the reader between the eyes with its first paragraph, well, *our* readers aren't apt to labor through much more of it." *Sky Riders* pays $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents a word up, on acceptance.

Western Romances, 100 Fifth Avenue, New York, is somewhat broadening its field, writes Carson W. Mowre, editor. "Any story of the old West, be it cattle-country, mining, timber, or border, is welcome. The romance must parallel the action theme from the beginning and not be a clinch tacked on at the climax and called a romance. It must be the virile, clean type of story. Empire builders and the period yarn also are welcome." Payment is at $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents a word up, on acceptance.

War Stories, *Sky Riders*, and *Scotland Yard*, 100 Fifth Avenue, New York, of the Dell group, "are open for one-page verse spreads," writes Richard A. Martinsen, editor; "dramatic he-man stuff that tells a story or shouts a gripping battle-song. No abstract or soulful panegyrics to fame, glory, or the sweet, clear voice of duty wanted. Lay off the heart-throbs and aimless piffle. The hard-boiled story is the thing! About 20 to 25 short lines per poem will do nicely, and the payment will run from at least a quarter to fifty cents per line."

Sports Afield and Trails of the Northwoods, 1645 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, Minn., "is in the market for outdoor fiction as well as hunting, fishing, and camp articles," writes Ivan B. Romig, publisher. "Our rates are from $\frac{1}{2}$ cent a word up." Payment, it is understood, is on publication.

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WHEN a teacher wants an instructor, to whom does he go? Surely that is an important question, and in its answer must lie information of considerable value to every one. It is said that some persons are quite gullible outside of their own field of endeavor. However true or untrue that may be, it seems that a teacher must certainly be able to judge another teacher.

It is therefore a commentary of great significance that The Author & Journalist's Simplified Training Course is without question the most favored of all methods of short-story training and David Raffelock, director of the S. T. C., the most popular instructor, among teachers.

That this should be so is logical. The Simplified Training Course embodies the most advanced and yet the soundest pedagogical principles. It is in addition surprisingly free of academic restrictions. It teaches and it trains, thus achieving the ideal in instruction. In addition it is intensely practical. Among the most enthusiastic "non-official" advertisers of the Simplified Training Course are university and high school teachers. Here is what some of them say:

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"May I say here at the end of the first lesson group that although I have taken quite a few courses in short-story writing, and have quite a library on the short-story and its milieu, none has given me one-tenth as valuable practical and exact knowledge of the short-story as yours has done. May I also express my sincere gratitude therefor, as well as for the courteous treatment accorded me since I joined the S. T. C."—Philip Romanov, Norfolk, Va.

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"I am enjoying the S. T. C. very much and can hardly keep away from it. I enjoy your criticisms of my manuscripts and can readily see the justice of them."—Cleveland Loper, Topeka, Kansas.

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PIANO TEACHER

"Thank you for the letter and comments which are always excellent, by the way. Indeed, I have both enjoyed and gained much from your course. Whereas I had taken several other courses, not one has made the form of the short-story clear to me. I wish the S. T. C. all the success that it deserves. I am really very grateful for all of your criticisms."—Ida J. Lie, San Francisco, Calif.

FROM A COLLEGE PROFESSOR

"I certainly thank myself and you that I have undertaken this course. It has given me an appreciation of short-story technique and composition that I never before possessed. I am still hopeful that I will do something worth while."—R. W. Hidy, Northfield, Vermont.

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Home Digest, 7310 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Mich., sends the following information to intending contributors: "*Home Digest* caters to the home and health field, reaching well-to-do people, largely in the smaller cities. We prefer 'short short-stories' of love, adventure, mystery; humorous stories; and little stories of dogs and other animals, for children. We use articles relating to the home, interior decoration and kindred subjects; 'personality' articles about actors, talkie stars and other prominent or unusual people; articles relating to health and the care and training of children. We also use one or two short poems, of cheerful, inspiring, humorous, sentimental or timely type, appealing to women. Feature articles and stories may be about 1200 words in length, special subjects and children's stories should be from 500 to 800 words. We pay 2 cents a word for stories and articles, and \$3 to \$5 for poems. This publication is sponsored by the Battle Creek Food Company, which does not recommend the use of meats or fish, fried foods, cane sugar, pastry, salt, pepper, or other condiments of any kind, or alcohol or tobacco in any form. We work from four to six months ahead and shall be glad to consider timely manuscripts meeting our requirements. We pay on final acceptance."

Irwin Publishing Company, 143 W. Twentieth Street, New York, is discontinuing its magazine, *Humor*, for the present, writes Merle W. Hersey, editor. "*Joy* and *Hot Stories* have both been dropped. *Gay Parisienne* and *La Patee Stories* are being continued and improved by using three-color covers and a rotogravure insert." The Irwin publications apparently are making some effort to bring up past-due accounts with authors.

The Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, 420 Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia, which publishes *Forward*, *The Pioneer*, *Queen's Gardens*, and *Sunbeam*, urges authors to observe the grading of the papers and length of manuscripts (as stated in the A. & J. quarterly market list) very carefully. Rev. Park Hays Miller, associate editor, writes: "Stories should be written to meet the needs of the particular age group which each paper represents. We like stories that deal with the normal experiences of readers of the ages for which the papers are intended, and present in an appealing way high ideals. But these ideals should not be presented in such a way as to let our readers think they are beyond reach. They should seem practical. We like stories which involve choices that reveal character and tend to form character, but we like these choices to be followed by endeavor and persistence which will develop character in the person who makes the choice. In other words, so often a story writer feels he has accomplished his purpose when an heroic decision has been made, where as often, I feel, in real life a great struggle follows the choice."

Everyday Mechanics, 96 Park Place, New York, "is in the market continuously for all sorts of practical mechanical devices that the home craftsman can make himself," writes H. Gernsback, editor. "Articles on practical photography, chemistry, electricity, radio, woodworking, metalworking, etc., are what we want." Rates of payment, it is understood, are low.

Visions, The National Poetry Monthly, P. O. Box 95, Little Falls, Minn., which has not been published for some time owing to a dispute over ownership, will reappear soon, it is announced by George Henry Kay, editor. It will use verse of all kinds and lengths, articles, and reviews on poets and poetry. Payment in prizes only.

Marriage Confessions is the new title adopted by *Marriage Stories*, a Dell publication, 100 Fifth Avenue, New York. Material used apparently will now be of the first-person, confession variety, centering around marriage problems.

Discontinued—Suspended

Modern Priscilla, New York.

Miss 1930, New York.

Air Travel News, Detroit, Mich.

Navy Stories, New York.

War Novels, New York.

Agricultural Markets

Prairie Farmer, 1230 W. Washington Boulevard, Chicago, buys about four long articles on farming or stock raising each week, paying at a rate of ½ cent or better per word on publication. The rest of the paper is taken up with editorial and departmental matter by the staff. Pictures are desirable with articles. The latter may be from 1000 to 2500 words.

The Illinois Farmer, 212 W. Monroe Street, Chicago, purchases from two to three articles on agriculture every two weeks. Payment is at around ½ cent a word on publication.

Ohio Farmer, Cleveland, Ohio, uses short-stories of from 1000 to 2000 words, also a limited number of special articles on farm subjects, illustrated, paying at from ½ to 1 cent a word on publication. Occasionally it buys a photograph of some farm scene for its cover page, usually paying \$5 for it.

American Thresherman, Madison, Wis., pays ½ cent a word on publication for articles—500 to 1500 words each—on threshing, farm mechanics, farm power, tractor work, etc.

Successful Farming, Des Moines, Iowa, buys an occasional short-story of 2000 to 4000 words with a "farm flavor." It pays ½ cent a word on acceptance. Its articles are purchased usually "by contract." It also buys a few dialogue jokes, paying 50 cents each on acceptance. *Successful Farming* also pays \$1 each for "tasty" dishes—recipes—in season. Send in seasonal recipes about three months in advance of time such dishes are usually prepared.

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If you have been unsuccessful in placing your work, you want to know **why** you are not selling; if you have placed only a few of your stories you want to know how to increase your sales. If you're a "drifter" you'll wish for success but never do very much about it. There are thousands of that kind of "writers" who never get out of the "amateur" class.

During the month of August, 1930, I placed twenty short stories and two serials for my clients with popular American magazines, sales amounting to \$3558.00. Five of these were the first sales of new writers.

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Capper's Farmer, Topeka, Kans., buys very little material from outside sources except short 200-300-word experience items from actual farmers. Longer articles are either staff written or "arranged for." Payment is on acceptance at around 1/2 cent a word. *The Household Magazine* of the same group at same address buys seven or eight garden feature articles, well illustrated, per year. These must be addressed to women readers. Payment is on acceptance at usually around 1 cent a word, with allowance for photographs.

British Market News

Britannia and *Eve*, British National Newspapers, Ltd., 346, Strand, London, W. C. 2, are open for short-stories 3500 to 5000 words, articles on home and fashion. They are always willing to consider new writers and illustrators, but only accept the very best material.

From the house of Benn Brothers, 154 Fleet Street, London, E. C. 4, are issued a number of successful trade papers. *The Chemical Age* deals with the chemical industry and chemical engineering. *Discovery* takes authoritative articles on science, literature, history, and the arts. *The Electrician* deals with the technical and selling side of the trades. The titles of other trade journals explain themselves: *Fruit Grower*, *Gardening Illustrated*, *Gas World*, *Hardware Trade Journal*, *Leather Trades Review*, *Miller*, *Nursing World*, and *Fruit Trades Journal*.

The publishers of the *Strand Magazine* are Messrs. George Newnes, Ltd., 8/11, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W. C. 2. In their fiction they emphasize strong plot and exciting incident, also bright entertainment, but no mawkish sentiment. Novelty and freshness is the keynote of this magazine, the length may be from 3000 to 7000 words. They issue four other magazines, *Wide World*, *Grand*, *Happy Mag*, and *Sunny Mag*. The first deals entirely with true stories, usually of adventure, having exciting incident, 3000 to 5000 words, and illustrated with the persons and places concerned. The editor states that "these narratives should be accompanied by a written guarantee of the absolute veracity of the story in every detail." Curiosity articles, strange manners and customs, are also needed. The second magazine is more of the homely type, but stories must be of a high quality and about 5000 words. The *Happy* and *Sunny* magazines cater to bright young people. Love and romance (avoiding silly sentiment) in modern vein will find a market with either of these magazines. Newnes also issues a series of women's magazines. *Woman's Life*, weekly, requires married life and romance stories under 2500 words, suitable for homely middle-class readers, also serials of 40,000 words, but the paper must be studied to obtain the angle of these. *Lady's Companion*, weekly, is a similar publication. Articles should be 3000 to 5000 words, and serials up to

60,000 words. *Home Magazine* and *The Ladies' Field*, monthly, uses short-stories and serials of feminine appeal, 5000 and 50,000 words, respectively; articles of 500 words and over of home interest and on decoration will be considered. *Modern Woman*, monthly, needs good class fiction of 2000 to 12,000 words, also notes on new handicrafts and facts about good looks and home management. *Modern Home*, monthly, articles on home subjects, furnishing, decoration, simple handicrafts; also short-stories of 2000 to 8000 words will be considered.

Shurey's Publications, Ltd., 1, Farringdon Avenue, London, E. C. 4, a group publisher who issues journals having a popular appeal in which love and emotion copy preponderates, has recently issued a statement of present needs. These include for *Complete Novel Weekly*, one story, 30,000 words. Submit synopsis and opening chapter. *Smart Novels* (weekly), similar, but 25,000 words. *Girls' Mirror* (weekly), one story, 20,000 words, no sex question, must be fit for family reading. *Christian Novels*, one homely novel, 23,000 words, and serial.

The National Sunday School Union, 57-59, Ludgate Hill, London, E. C. 4, have requested copy for their two papers, *Child's Own Magazine*, which uses stories, articles, and verses suitable for children of 7 to 12 years of age; and for *New Chronicle of Christian Education*, devoted to articles on Sunday School work.

Two humorous weeklies published by George Newnes, Ltd., 8 to 11, Southampton Street, Strand, London W. C. 2, the *Humorist*, and *London Opinion*, are in the market for humorous articles of a topical nature of 800 to 1200 words, also humorous drawings. Newnes also issue *Tit-Bits*, a national weekly which welcomes suggestions for articles and interviews, also short-stories with love interest of 2000 words.

Prize Contests

Liberty is running a new contest, "Problems of Conduct," in which it offers two weekly prizes of \$100 each. First is for the best letter of not over 1000 words in answer to a given problem. The other is for the best question in not to exceed 150 words on "What you would do" under circumstances contestant may suggest, something on the order of some of the famous Edison questions. Address: Problems, *Liberty Weekly*, P. O. Box 556, Grand Central Station, New York. *Liberty's* limerick contest closed with the issue of September 13th.

The Golden Book, 55 Fifth Avenue, New York, offers a \$25 prize each month for the best essay on "My Favorite Story and Why."

Real Detective Tales, 1050 N. La Salle Street, Chicago, continues to offer nominal monthly prizes for the solutions of two-part detective stories which are published in each issue.

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There is today a new woman. She has overcome her greatest obstacles and is tearing down the man-built world for men only. She is rebuilding it into a man-and-woman world. Some even are inclined to believe that she is remaking it into a woman's world.

The viewpoint of the woman of today is important. She has made her way into almost all professions and occupations. She is less bound by convention and accepted opinion. What she recommends is what she has found out for herself to be worth recommending. Never in the history of the world has there been even a fraction of the number of successful women writers there is today. Business women turn to The Author & Journalist's Simplified Training Course, for they are convinced of its value. They are eager to tell others of its tested worth:

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"I wish I could half way express appreciation for the Simplified Training Course. Even my highbrow husband who is a professor at _____ University, said, 'Gosh, but that fellow from the S. T. C. sends you good, constructive criticisms.' I've written a novel and hope someday to bring honor to my splendid instructor."—Anne B. Fisher, Pacific Grove, Calif.

SOCIAL WORKER

"I am most interested in the Simplified Training Course and am anxious to continue with it. You will be pleased, I know, to hear that I had a story in the October issue of Ghost Stories."—E. Jean Magie, Los Angeles, Calif.

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"Your criticisms are always helpful and greatly appreciated. The S. T. C. is certainly inspirational and so very clear in every point."—Doris T. Gorman, Los Angeles, Calif.

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"What I have done already in the S. T. C. has been of great assistance to me, even in my everyday work. I wish to thank you very much for your criticisms on my first batch of assignments."—Dorothy McKenzie, Halifax, N. S., Canada.

BOOKKEEPER

"Let me take this opportunity to say that while I have not yet earned a check, I simply must write, and the S. T. C. has been more inspiration to me than all the short-story classes, courses, etc., which I have tried for the past ten years."—Madeline R. Smith, Portland, Ore.

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"I have had a few acceptances lately. I feel as though I am really 'breaking in' at last and a good deal of the credit goes to your helpful criticism."—Margaret Johnson, New York, N. Y.

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"The Simplified Training Course is very readable and makes one want to begin working immediately. I am enjoying the assignments and know I will profit from the training."—Frances La Batt, Los Angeles, Calif.

THE SIMPLIFIED TRAINING COURSE

1839 Champa Street Denver, Colorado

True Romances, 1926 Broadway, New York, offers monthly prizes of \$10, \$5, \$3, and \$2, for letters from women who have solved the problem of earning extra money while keeping their homes. *True Experiences*, another Macfadden magazine at the same address, offers similar prizes for letters from business and professional women who have carved out interesting careers.

Calgary Eye Opener, Box 2068, Minneapolis, Minn., offers a monthly "Timeline Contest," in which the fifth line of a limerick is to be supplied. Prizes are \$25, \$15, and \$10. In addition, the magazine is paying \$5 each for acceptable contributions to its "Krusty Kumbaks" department. Entries for either feature must be mailed on post cards, one to the card. See the magazine for details.

The Cadman Creative Club, Los Angeles, recently announced a contest offering a \$50 prize for a feature article, also \$150 in prizes for a one-act play, art song, piano, organ and violin compositions. Particulars may be obtained from Myra Cain Grant, secretary, 4065 Oakwood Avenue, Los Angeles.

Field & Stream, 578 Madison Avenue, New York, offers \$50 value in three merchandise prizes in a monthly contest entitled "How Wise Are You?" Each month an outdoor story is published containing a number of mistakes. Contestants giving the best lists of mistakes in the story are awarded the prizes.

Rigaud-Parfumeur-Paris, is offering 380 prizes ranging from \$1200 in cash to bottles of perfume, for opinions, in fifty words or less, regarding the contestant's preference for one of two bargain offers addressed to American women. Only one entry permitted to each contestant. None will be returned. Contest closes at midnight November 1, 1930, and entries should be addressed to Rigaud, Box 16, Station C, New York. Full particulars in leading women's magazines.

The National Macaroni Manufacturers Association, People's Bank Building, Indianapolis, is offering \$5000 in cash prizes for recipes using macaroni, egg noodles or spaghetti. There are three \$500 first prizes and numerous other cash prizes. Contest is open to residents of the United States and Canada, and closes December 15, 1930. Contestants may send in as many recipes as they like. Full particulars may be found in women's magazines.

Daisy Manufacturing Co., 109 Union Street, Plymouth, Mich., offers more than \$500 in prizes for best letters on the subject of "How to Have the Most Fun With a Daisy Air Rifle." Write company for particulars. Closing date is not given.

The Gentlewoman, 615 W. Forty-third Street, New York, pays \$2 each for short—200 to 1000 words each—articles or stories dealing with ghosts. Address "Weird Whispers" Department.

College Humor, 1050 N. La Salle Street, Chicago, offers a first prize of \$500, second of \$300, third of \$200, fourth of \$100, and fifth of \$100, for articles describing trips taken by college students. Present students or students who graduated from college last June are eligible to compete. Manuscripts must be not less than 2000 nor more than 4000 words in length; they should, if possible, be accompanied by pictures. Manuscripts which do not win prizes may be purchased at regular rates. Closing date for mailing, midnight, October 30, 1930. Address Travel Editor. *College Humor's* second Campus Prize Novel contest, conducted with Doubleday-Doran & Company, as previously announced, closes October 15th.

The Great Northern Railway Company, care of Radio Station KSTP, St. Paul, Minn., is offering prizes of \$500, \$250, \$150, and \$100 for the best stories featuring the Northwest, suitable for Empire Builder radio programs. Closing date, November 1, 1930. Address Empire Builders Radio Story Contest care of the station. A helpful folder will be sent to intending contestants on request.

First National Products Co., 4611 N. Western Avenue, Chicago, offers a prize of \$1000 for the best name for a new mouth wash. If more than one name is sent by the same person, all are disqualified. Duplicate prizes will be given in case of a tie. Contest is open to all except residents of Chicago. It will close after the first of the year.

Wm. E. Wright & Sons Co., Orange, N. J., offer 100 cash prizes for best letters giving original and suitable ideas for using Wright's Bias Fold Tape. Write to company for details, list of prizes, and entry blank. Contest closes November 22, 1930.

Country Gentleman, Independence Square, Philadelphia, offers five prizes of \$10 each, and ten prizes of \$5 each for best letters, ranging from 500 to 1500 words in length, most completely answering the question: "How Can the Community Center Best Serve a Rural District?" Closing date, November 30, 1930. Address, "The Rural Club Woman."

Capper's Farmer, Topeka, Kans., says: "Perhaps you have found a way to outwit a household bugbear, or the means of making some household task lighter. In such cases we'd like to hear about it. Each month we pay \$5 for the best idea. \$1 is paid for all others used. Enclose postage if you wish your letter returned in case we cannot use it. No word limit, but make it short. Address "Stunts Department."

Motion Picture Magazine, 1501 Broadway, New York, awards cash prizes each month for best letters of 200 words or less, on "your ideas about the movies and stars." Sign full name and address—only initials will be used if requested. No letters returned. Letters can be "fan" style or criticism of either a picture or stars. Prizes are \$20, \$10, \$5 and \$1. Address Laurence Reid, editor.

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Trade, Technical and Class Journal Department

JOHN T. BARTLETT, EDITOR

SIZING UP A MARKET

EDITORIAL advice most frequently given is, "Before submitting manuscript, get one of our magazines, and study it."

Most writers examine a magazine to discover the type of material the editor seems to favor. Other things can be learned from examination, however.

What proportion of contents is prepared by staff, what proportion by experts in the field covered, and what proportion by free-lances? An examination of many technical magazines will reveal that free-lances are selling almost nothing to them. There are other magazines whose purchases from free-lances are very heavy, as indicated by the kind of material used and the by-lines.

Other things being equal, we shall expect the magazine printed on high-grade book paper, using extensive art work, to pay higher rates than others. Examination will reveal to us the preferred lengths for articles, and the measure in which the editor insists upon photographic material.

There are tell-tale marks of low rates—use of much clipped or syndicated material, amateur editing, cheap printing.

On the average, national publications pay higher rates than regional ones. The latter in most cases buy material chiefly from free-lances in their territories.

What a writer can hope to accomplish for a given publication cannot be settled wholly by an examination of the magazine. However, skillful marketing is aided tremendously by such study. The experienced writer becomes expert in making deductions.

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GETTING THE SLANT

THE successful writer of articles must have a good understanding of what the editors of individual magazines are trying to do. "Getting the slant," is how writers refer to the process. Those writers who are able to place articles, on first attempts, with dozens of magazines, have mastered this essential feature of practical article writing.

The business papers, as a group, are helping their readers—merchants, department managers, and the like—to make greater profits. The skillful writer views all material in relation to this policy. The slant results.

For example, it is learned that a department store has one employee who has been with it 40 years, eight with it 25 years, and 100 over 10

years. An article could be written on the subject, "Blank Department Store Has Many Veteran Employees." That isn't the story, however, for a business paper.

This store, it is clear, has followed policies and plans which have been unusually successful in reducing labor turnover. So—getting the slant—the business writer will interview to ascertain how the store succeeds in keeping employees for long periods. The article written will be on turnover reduction.

A credit man remarked to the interviewer that some very queer customers approached his desk. The newspaper story would be, "Queer Customers." The business paper article is—

"Credit-Granting Plans Which Build Sales to Freak Customers."

Let's examine slant with reference to a single subject—home financing. The trade publications, such as *National Retail Lumber Dealer*, will be interested in an article showing how a lumber yard has increased its business with a financing department. A magazine for the home, such as *Good Housekeeping*, or *Ladies' Home Journal*, will be interested in a home-financing article showing the ins and outs—how to finance economically and effectively. A magazine such as *The Nation*, or *The New Republic*, will want a story showing how the home-financing trade has grown into a racket which is victimizing many ambitious, but unsophisticated, married couples. The slant of *Nation's Business* will be an article showing the extent of home financing, as an industry, and its relation to the future of the country.

The writer who has learned how to size up a magazine, or group of magazines, for slant, accurately, possesses one of the most important qualifications for success in the article field.

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LITERARY MARKET TIPS

IN THE TRADE, TECHNICAL, AND CLASS JOURNAL FIELD

The editor of *Aeronautical World Journal of Commerce*, now located at 1206 S. Maple Avenue, Los Angeles, writes, "We never pay for articles which publicize any particular firms."

Articles for *National Retail Clothier*, Franklin and Congress Streets, Chicago, must be of feature length—1000 to 2000 words. No "shorts" are used.

Building Supply News and *Brick and Clay Record* have moved from 407 S. Dearborn Street to 59 E. Van Buren Street, Chicago.

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P. S. *Gangster Stories* needs 3000 to 5000-word rapid-action stories, where law and order win out, but where the gangster is not made a sissy.

P. P. S. *Outlaws of the West* is proving somewhat of a miracle. It came back with the June-July issue, increasing some 17,000 copies in sale with that number and we feel that it will be a most interesting periodical to watch. Send us short, humorous stories for the magazine, as we have all the long material that we need.

MSS. WANTED 250 to 2500 words relative to care of infants and children under seven. Practical, informative and helpful; not medical. Short poems, in humorous vein, not juvenile. Payment upon publication. Enclose stamped envelope for return if not available.

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Leather & Findings, Paul Spies, editor, is now located at 105 S. Ninth Street, St. Louis. It is in the market for news and features on the shoe-findings trade. Payment is made after publication at ½ cent a word up.

Talking Machine World & Radio Merchant, 420 Lexington Avenue, New York, has changed its name to *Radio-Music Merchant*. Each issue contains several 1000 to 2000-word name-and-fact features on the merchandising of radios by radio and music dealers. Payment is at approximately 1 cent a word the month of publication.

Automotive Merchandising, 97 Horatio Street, New York, S. P. McMinn, editor, is devoting much more space than usual to material having to do with the practical mechanical matters in a garage. 1 cent a word is paid promptly on acceptance.

Drug Topics, 291 Broadway, New York, Dan Rennick, associate editor, is in the market for "shorts" ranging from about 150 to 250 words, with illustrations if the idea described is unusual. Syndicate matter is not acceptable. All ideas must be based on actual drug-store experience.

Electrical Contracting, 520 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, according to the editor, "is of pictorial nature, and as little text matter as possible is used because of limited space."

Nugents, 239 W. Thirty-ninth Street, New York, a publication for buyers of fashion merchandise, is now paying upon publication, rather than acceptance, according to Clinton G. Harris, editor. As much of the magazine is devoted to fashion, it offers only a limited market for the ordinary feature story of the trade.

Mosaics & Terrazzo is a new publication launched by the Gillette Publishing Company, 221 W. Twentieth Street, Chicago, J. M. Buckley, editor. It will be devoted to the uses and sale of mosaics and terrazzo work. Articles are paid for on publication at 1 cent a word.

Building Age, one of the National Trade Journals, 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, and *American Builder*, 105 W. Adams Street, Chicago, will be merged with the October issue, under the name of *American Builder & Building Age*, and published at the Chicago address. Design, erection methods, financing, selling, building economy, utilization of building materials and products, and allied subjects, will be covered editorially.

Paul R. Eckerson, editor of *Western Barber*, 312 E. Twelfth Street, Los Angeles, writes that he is using very little outside material, "as we have staff, correspondents, clipping service, etc., and numerous free contributions for practically all material required."

J. O. Hodges is now editor of *Western Baker*, 369 Pine Street, San Francisco. *Western Baker* is interested only in articles covering bakers' activities in the eleven Western states. 1 cent a word is paid on publication.

Treve H. Collins, for long the popular editor of *Plumbers & Heating Contractors Trade Journal*, and the *Wholesaler-Salesman*, 239 W. Thirtieth Street, New York, is resigning October 3 to return to free-lance writing. R. G. Bookhout will succeed him. "Treve" suggests that writers withhold their contributions to Mr. Bookhout until the latter part of October.

Southern Automotive Journal of Atlanta, Ga., and *Southwestern Automotive Journal*, Dallas, Tex., have merged under the title *Southern Automotive Journal*. The new publication made its first appearance with the September issue, the W. R. C. Smith Publishing Company, 1021 Grant Building, Atlanta, Ga., publisher. The magazine will cover the automotive trade of the Southern states.

I. Masini, who wrote that he was handling all articles submitted to *Food Shop News*, Cincinnati, cannot be located at 443 S. Dearborn Street, Chicago. Mail addressed to him is returned, unclaimed.

Iron Trade Review, Penton Publishing Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, is now called *Steel*.

Scientific American, 24 W. Fortieth Street, New York, is overstocked.

Pacific Flyer, 308 Balboa Building, San Francisco, is buying no material at present.

Radio Open Time Service, 510 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, is a new publication for radio advertisers. Charles Green is editor.

Wayside Salesman, Waverly, Iowa, evidently is not very actively in the market for manuscripts, for in returning a number of articles, Editor Frank Gruber wrote: "We are returning herewith the articles you submitted to us. Have not read these articles, so do not know whether they would be suitable for this or not."

Thomas McAuliffe is the new editor of *Tire & Auto Accessory Topics*, 250 W. Fifty-seventh Street, New York.

Cement, Mill & Quarry has been bought by, and merged with, *Pit & Quarry*, 538 S. Clark Street, Chicago.

American Builder, published by the Simmons-Boardman Publishing Company, has absorbed *Building Developer*, New York, and *Home Building*, Chicago. The new, enlarged *American Builder* will continue to be published at 105 W. Adams Street, Chicago.

Savings Bank Journal, 11 E. Thirty-sixth Street, New York, in returning a 1000-word article recently, stated that it wanted longer material—2000 to 2500 words.

Editor and Publisher, 1700 Times Building, New York, writes: "We want news stories, written quickly and to the point, but they must be about interesting people or things—not just the dull routine that fills up the average so-called trade paper."

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Motorboat, 10 E. Thirty-ninth Street, New York, a semi-monthly, is edited by C. F. Hodge, who writes: "Our need is for cruise stories, actual stories by boatmen, running from 500 to 5000 words, with as many photos of the cruise as possible. We consider short-stories of motorboating, boats, and cruises around 5000 words, also humorous short-stories of boating interest. A limited amount of verse of boating appeal is used. We prefer material from writers who are themselves boatmen, outboard sailors, cruisers, or whatnot. We do not want strained tie-ups. Our stuff must ring true to motor-boating readers. There is a coming change of policy in our handling of outboard material. We can use outboard boating stories, but they must be under 500 words. Our material is paid for on publication at 30 cents a running inch; photos, \$1.50 each."

Beach & Pool Magazine, 2810 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, does not purchase material. "The major part of our material," according to Earl K. Collins, editor, "is sent to us by our advertisers through the engineers and architects who specialize in pool construction."

Discontinuances

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Chauncey Thomas, Denver, wrote: "Your sale of my 'Heap Bad Kiowa' to Popular Magazine, after you had submitted it to twenty-eight other markets, is a tribute to your persistence in marketing a manuscript in which you have confidence."

Evans Wall, Pond, Mississippi, whose first book, "The No-Nation Girl," we placed for him with The Century Company, wrote: "I shall never forget the debt of gratitude I owe you. . . . Your counsel and encouragement led me to write the book. . . ."

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